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Message Text

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ACTION MMO-02

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 ABF-01 PER-01
NSC-05 AID-05 /043 W
----------046880 020845Z /12
P 020601Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8250

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FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AODE
SUBJECT: MODE: AUTHORIZED STAFFING LEVELS FOR AID FOR FY 78
AND FY 79

REF: A) STATE 124987; B) STATE 96261; C) DAMASCUS 1618;
D) 77 DAMASCUS 7273; E) 77 DAMASCUS 5766

1. REF B, IN AIDAC SERIES, PROVIDED AUTHORIZED US DIRECT-
HIRE EMPLOYMENT LEVEL FOR FY 1978 AND FY 1979 AS FOLLOWS:

	FY 78	FY 79 (TENTATIVE)
USAID	19	20
IDI	0	1
PASA	4	8

2. COM APPROVED USDH 19 POSITION TOTAL FOR FY 1978, AN
INCREASE OF 3 OVER FY 77. THE NEW POSITIONS APPROVED WERE:

A) LEGAL ADVISOR. POSITION NO. 232761039. THIS WAS
TO BE A REGIONAL POSITION, LOCATED IN DAMASCUS WHERE
APPROXIMATELY FIFTY PERCENT OF THE POSITION'S
ESTIMATED WORKLOAD WOULD BE. AMBASSADOR APPROVED THE
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ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS POSITION AS AN EXCEPTION TO HIS
NORMAL POLICY OF NOT ACCEPTING REGIONAL POSITIONS ON THE
GROUNDS THAT ADDITION OF LEGAL ADVISOR TO USAID
STAFF WOULD ELIMINATE NEED FOR WASHINGTON REFERRAL OF
MANY LEGAL MATTERS AND WOULD ACCELERATE PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION GENERALLY (SEE 77 DAMASCUS 6050). POSITION
IS UNFORTUNATELY STILL VACANT.

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B) ASSISTANT AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER. POSITION NO. 232769022. STILL VACANT.

C) ASSISTANT PROGRAM OFFICER. (INCREASING THE PROGRAM OFFICE STAFF TO 3). POSITION NO. 232762021. CROWLEY, CHRISTOPHER.

3. AS FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE, AMBASSADOR MURPHY DID NOT SPECIFICALLY APPROVE 4 PASA POSITIONS SPECIFIED FOR USAID DAMASCUS IN FY 1979. QUESTION OF PASA POSITIONS HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY ARISEN AND WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THEY ARE SUBJECT TO MODE APPROVAL. AT PRESENT, IT APPEARS THREE PASA POSITIONS ARE JUSTIFIED, AGRICULTURAL ADVISORS FROM USDA TO SUPERVISE AND CARRY OUT AN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR ASSESSMENT IN SYRIA. AFTER SEVERAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN AID/W AND USAID, IT WAS DECIDED THAT A PASA ARRANGEMENT WOULD BEST MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS PROJECT. I CONCUR.

4. AMBASSADOR MURPHY HAD APPROVED AN INCREASE OF TWO USDH POSITIONS IN FY 1979. USAID DIRECTOR IS NOW PROPOSING A FURTHER INCREASE OF TWO USDH POSITIONS, MAKING A TOTAL OF FOUR. HE IS ALSO PROPOSING TO MAINTAIN NUMBER OF PASA POSITIONS AT 3, RATHER THAN THE 8 SPECIFIED IN REF B. FOUR ADDITIONAL US DIRECT HIRE POSITIONS PROPOSED ARE AS FOLLOWS:
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A) RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER. THIS POSITION IS JUSTIFIED IN LIGHT OF SYRIA'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL US ASSISTANCE IN THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR.

B) ENGINEER. THIS POSITION IS JUSTIFIED BY USAID DIRECTOR IN VIEW OF (1) DEPARTURE OF CHIEF OF CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE WHO ALSO HAPPENS TO BE AN ENGINEER, BUT WHOSE REPLACEMENT WILL NOT BE AN ENGINEER; (2) INCREASE IN ENGINEERING WORKLOAD IN IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRENT LARGE CAPITAL PROJECTS (DAMASCUS WATER SUPPLY, DAMASCUS-DERAA HIGHWAY, TARTOUS-LATTAKIA HIGHWAY, EUPHRATES IRRIGATION MAINTENANCE) WHICH TOTAL $192 MILLION IN CURRENT AND EXPECTED FY 78 OBLIGATIONS, AND IN-HOUSE ENGINEERING EXPERTISE REQUIRED TO DEVELOP AND MONITOR SEVERAL RURAL SERVICES PROJECTS NOW UNDER DISCUSSION AND PLANNING WITH SARG COMMITTEES.

C) PROGRAM OFFICE SECRETARY. THIS POSITIONS APPEARS JUSTIFIED IN LIGHT OF THE HEAVY WORKLOAD OF THE 3-MAN PROGRAM OFFICE.

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D) SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST (IDI). AID REQUIREMENT FOR SOCIAL SOUNDNESS AND BENEFICIARY ANALYSIS FOR NEW DIRECTIONS AND BASIC HUMAN NEEDS TYPE PROJECTS INDICATES THE NEED FOR USAID CAPABILITY IN THIS AREA. WITHOUT A FULL-TIME ASSIGNED PERSON IN THIS AREA, USAID HAS FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ACQUIRE THIS TYPE OF ANALYSIS THROUGH SHORT TERM TDY ASSIGNMENTS. I CONCUR IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THESE FOUR POSITIONS.

5. I WILL CONTINUE TO REVIEW CAREFULLY EVERY AID REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL POSITIONS. OBVIOUSLY, QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ARE REQUIRED TO SEE THAT OUR ASSISTANCE FUNDS ARE EFFECTIVELY UTILIZED, AND A GROWING PROGRAM SUCH AS THIS ONE MEANS SOME STAFF INCREASES. IN VIEW OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF LIVING
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IN THE SYRIAN ENVIRONMENT AND HOST COUNTRY SENSITIVITIES WHICH WOULD BE AROUSED BY ANY DRAMATIC INCREASE IN STAFF, I HAVE INSISTED ON BEING SATISFIED THAT A FULL-TIME JOB EXISTS BEFORE APPROVING A POSITION INCREASE AND HAVE REQUIRED TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE THAT TDY PERSONNEL BE USED FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND SIMILAR WORK OF SHORT TERM INTENSITY. THIS WILL CONTINUE TO BE THIS POST'S POLICY WITH REGARD TO AID MISSION STAFFING.
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